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Department of State

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218

PAGE 01 STATE 189503 1198 STATE 189503

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 189503

FOR AMB. GAVIN FROM DEP. ASST. SECS. ASENCIO AND ENDERS

E.O. 12065: GDS 7/8/88 (ASENCIO, DIEGO C.)
TAGS: CASC; (SULLIVAN, JOHN J.)
SUBJECT: M/V - DISAPPEARANCE OF JOHN J. SULLIVAN

1. CONFIDENTIAL ENTIRE TEXT.

2. AS YOU MAY KNOW, JOHN J. SULLIVAN, A FREE LANCE AMERICAN JOURNALIST, DISAPPEARED IN SAN SALVADOR ON DEC. 28, 1980, SHORTLY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL. HIS DISAPPEARANCE, STILL UNRESOLVED DESPITE CONSTANT EFFORTS ON THE PART OF THE DEPT AND AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR, HAS SPARKED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST ON THE PART OF THE PRESS AND THE CONGRESS OVER THE LAST 18 MONTHS. THE SULLIVAN CASE, FOR EXAMPLE, IS NOW LIKELY TO BECOME PART OF THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS REQUIRED BY THE CONGRESS OF THE ADMINISTRATION IN RELATION TO CONTINUING AID TO EL SALVADOR.

2. STATEMENTS MADE BY JUAN JOSE DALTON AND MORALES ERLICH DURING A JULY 7TH PRESS CONFERENCE IN MEXICO CITY HAVE GENERATED CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION HERE, PARTICULARLY ON THE PART OF THE FAMILY AND INTERESTED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. WHILE WE DOUBT THE CREDIBILITY OF THEIR CLAIMS, AND DO NOT WANT TO ADD TO THE VERACITY OF THEIR ACCUSATION, THE DEPT HAS AN OBLIGATION TO PURSUE EVERY POSSIBLE LEAD REGARDING

MR. SULLIVAN'S WHEREABOUTS.

3. CA DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROBERT B. LANE HAD ALREADY PLANNED AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO MEXICO CITY BEGINNING JULY 11. AS A RESULT OF THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT, AND AS A CLEAR DEMONSTRATION OF OUR CONCERN OVER MR. SULLIVAN'S DISAPPEARANCE, MR. LANE WILL MOVE FORWARD HIS SCHEDULED VISIT AND WILL ARRIVE IN MEXICO CITY FRIDAY, JULY 9. (EXACT ITINERARY AND ETA WILL FOLLOW SEPTEL.) DURING THE VISIT, MR. LANE WILL COORDINATE WITH THE EMBASSY ON THE SULLIVAN CASE, WITH THE PARTICULAR GOAL OF ORCHESTRATING AN APPROACH BY CONSULAR OFFICERS TO THE SALVADORANS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ELICITING FURTHER INFO THEY MIGHT HAVE RE MR. SULLIVAN'S WHEREABOUTS.

5. WE REGRET THE SHORT FUSE ON THIS ONE AND APPRECIATE AMEMBASSY MEXICO'S COOPERATION IN THIS IMPORTANT EFFORT. STOESSEL

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EXCISE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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